

“Hickory Motor Speedway Opens 2016 Season” Historic Track Ready for 65th Consecutive Season of Racing

NEWTON, N.C. – The outside temperature is warming up and this is the sign that spring is coming which will bring an annual tradition to the Greater Hickory Metro that fans are excited to get started once again – NASCAR racing at Hickory Motor Speedway.

The speedway will kick off its 65th season of NASCAR Whelen All-American Series competition this Saturday with the Spring Classic.

Classic is an appropriate name for the event for Americas Most Famous Short. From NASCAR Hall of Fame drivers Ned Jarrett, Dale Jarrett, Bobby Isaac, Jack Ingram and Junior Johnson to current NASCAR Sprint Cup Series regular Matt DiBenedetto – many legendary names in NASCAR either called Hickory Motor Speedway home or won races or championships at the .363-mile track.

The next future NASCAR Sprint Cup Series star could be competing at the track this weekend as Junior Motorsports development driver and former Hickory Motor Speedway Track Champion Josh Berry will be joined by two-time Track Champion Austin McDaniel, Shane Lee and Dexter Canipe Jr. and many others in the feature event.

Headlining Saturday’s season-opening schedule will be the NASCAR Whelen All American Series Bojangles Late Model division in a 100-lap feature. Other divisions in action include 35-lap features for the Limited Late Models and Super Trucks. The Street Stocks will battle for 30 laps and the Renegade division will also have a 20-lap race.

The Spring Classic will also feature a special start time of 5 p.m. with gates opening at 3 p.m.

For the fourth consecutive season the track will also feature the Paramount Kia “Big 10” Challenge for its feature division. This is a special 10-race series featuring special purse amounts and bonus awards for drivers who compete in the special series to highlight the Late Model Stock drivers.

“We’re very fortunate to have a well-known and established company like Paramount Auto Group to step up and partner with the track to give our competitors a prestigious series and give the fans a great show during this 10-race challenge,” said HMS track promoter Kevin Piercy. “Paramount’s support allows us to give Late Model stock drivers from across the state and region an opportunity to race for respectable purses and the prestige that comes with being a feature race winner at Hickory Motor Speedway.”

Since Gwyn Staley won the first race held at the track in 1951, the legendary facility has not only served as a proving ground for up and coming drivers, it also helped some of today’s sharpest minds in the sport hone their skills either behind the wheel and /or applying that knowledge as a crew chief or pit crew member.

Several former track champions have made that a reality with 2004 champion Matt McCall now serving as crew chief for NASCAR Sprint Cup Series driver Jamie McMurray. Shane Huffman (1999) calls the shots for Timothy Peters in the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series with Mark Setzer serving as an integral part with Richard Gdovic’s NASCAR Xfinity Series team and two-time champion (1987 & 1988) Robert Huffman serving as a truck chief in the NCWTS for former NSCS champion and team owner Brad Keselowski.

Brothers Andy and Marty Houston won track titles in 1994 & 1997, respectively and both currently work for Richard Childress Racing with Andy currently serving as spotter for NSCS driver Austin Dillon.

“Hickory has a proud tradition of producing talent throughout the world of NASCAR and fans can expect to see that on track at Hickory Motor Speedway this season,” said Piercy. “Josh Berry has already made starts for Dale Earnhardt Jr. in the NASCAR Xfinity Series and Shane Lee competed at Daytona International Speedway in February and I don’t see this pipeline of talent from Hickory stopping anytime soon.”

DiBenedetto, who competed in the NASCAR Whelen All American Series Bojangles Late Model division at Hickory when he was a student at Fred T. Foard High in Newton, has progressed to a full-time ride in NASCAR premiere division and has proven once again if you can compete and win at Hickory Motor Speedway you are likely talented enough to climb the NASCAR ladder and make it to one of NASCAR’s national series.

“We work hard to produce a family oriented atmosphere for our fans when they choose to come watch a race at this legendary track and we’re going to continue in our efforts to make sure their experience at Hickory Motor Speedway lives up to their expectations when they come to a race,” Piercy said.

Ticket prices for the Spring Classic Season Opener are only \$11 for adults; teen and seniors are just \$9 with kids 12 and under free. The track is also offering for a limited time a NASCAR Whelen All-American Series 20 race ticket pack for just \$185.

For more information call 828-464-3655 or visit www.hickorymotorspeedway.com